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UNCLAS GEORGETOWN 000122

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SUBJECT: Update on Leptospirosis in Guyana

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(E) GEORGETOWN 45, (F) GEORGETOWN 41

1. Leptospirosis is considered endemic in Guyana. In January 2005 during catastrophic flooding Guyana experienced an outbreak of the disease far above baseline levels with 65 laboratory -confirmed cases and more than 200 additional suspected cases.

2. Increasing numbers of cases clinically consistent with leptospirosis have been reported in Guyana since Nov 2005. Rapid testing is available in country but is not utilized for all cases and no validation testing has been performed. Current case estimates according to the Ministry of Health are:

Suspected cases: 63

Confirmed cases: 18

Deaths: 2 confirmed, 6 additional suspected

3. Surveillance numbers are not consistent with those reported by clinical facilities, and the Director of Disease Control has requested assistance in clarifying these issues.

4. At the request of the Minister of Health, CDC is sending a technical team to assist in investigation and response to this new cluster of cases. The team will include Dr. Eric Stern, medical epidemiologist and Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer and Renee Galloway, laboratory specialist, Meningitis and Special Pathogens Branch, CDC. They arrived in country Thursday Feb 2nd and anticipate a 2-3 week stay. Their work will be facilitated by the CDC GAP Guyana Office.

5. They will initially assess clinical, laboratory, and public health responses to the situation and assist the government of Guyana in handling this outbreak and establishing a system for response to leptospirosis outbreaks in the future, as this will likely be a long-term issue in Guyana.

BULLEN